

THE POET AND THE CHRONICLER. Reflection of the Spanish American reality in the prose of Octavio Paz and Carlos Monsiváis
ABSTRACT

Analysing selected essays by Octavio Paz and literary *crónicas* by Carlos Monsiváis we try to demonstrate that the relationship between the literary and journalistic works of the two authors is that of complementariness rather than opposition as many literary critics have understood it. Joint reading of the works of these two perhaps most important Mexican intellectuals of the second half of the 20th century facilitates their understanding as both Paz's and Monsiváis's critical thinking comes out of the 19th century Mexican liberal tradition. The first chapter deals with the literary representation of the crucial year of 1968 in Mexico in the *Critique of the pyramid* (*Crítica de la pirámide*, 1970) by Octavio Paz and in *Days to remember* (*Días de guardar*, 1970) by Carlos Monsiváis. We concentrate on the metaphor and the irony as different modes of historical imagination of the studied authors, on the sources of their figurative expression (holistic archetypal conception of the world in contrast to the fragmenting use of polyphony) and the tone which the authors use to address their readers. We consider the ideas of Hayden White, Paul Ricoeur and M. M. Bakhtin as our theoretical framework. The second chapter goes on to discuss the problems of genre and the ways in which the genre of essay in the case of Octavio Paz and the genre of *crónica* in the case of Carlos Monsiváis influences their literary representation of reality. We find theoretical support in the works of Theodor W. Adorno (essay) and Linda Egan and Beth E. Jörgensen (*crónica*) and the texts selected for closer analysis are the *Philantropic ogre* (*El ogro filantrópico*, 1979) by Paz and two *crónicas* from *Days to remember* by Monsiváis. Finally, the third chapter focusses on the stereotypes of Mexican national culture and their treatment in Paz's *Labyrinth of solitude* (*El laberinto de la soledad*, 1950) and Monsiváis' journalistic writings. Our theoretical approach to this problem is based on the thinking of Roland Barthes and Roger Bartra.